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Daily Highlights

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Security Council authorizes Member States, acting through or in cooperation with NATO, to establish multinational Implementation Force to implement Bosnian Peace Agreement.

* Secretary-General briefs Security Council on recent visits to West Africa and Europe; to hold press conference at Headquarters on Monday.

* General Assembly waives South Africa's unpaid dues from apartheid era; adopts resolutions on question of Palestine, assistance to Nicaragua and situation in Haiti.

* Secretary-General has made advancement of women a policy priority of United Nations, Special Political Adviser tells Women's International Forum.

* UNDP to open Sarajevo office in March; will provide assistance with governance and aid coordination and conduct studies to determine Bosnia's needs.

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The Security Council today authorized Member States, acting through or in cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to establish a multinational Implementation Force (IFOR) to implement the Bosnian Peace Agreement. It welcomed and supported the Agreement, which was signed yesterday in Paris, and called upon the parties to fulfil in good faith the commitments entered into in it. The Council took that action, under Chapter VII of the Charter, by unanimously adopting resolution 1031 (1995).

The Council authorized the Member States to take all necessary measures to implement and ensure compliance with Annex 1-A of the Peace Agreement. It stressed that the parties should be held equally responsible for compliance with that Annex, and should be equally subject to such enforcement action by IFOR as might be necessary to ensure its implementation and the protection of IFOR. The Council authorized the Member States to take all necessary

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measures, at the request of IFOR, either in defence of IFOR or to assist the Force in carrying out its mission, and recognized the right of the Force to take all necessary measures to defend itself. It demanded that the parties respect the security and freedom of movement of IFOR and other international personnel.

The Council decided that, with effect from the day on which the transfer of authority from the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to IFOR took place, the authority to take certain measures conferred upon States by resolutions 770 (1992), 781 (1992), 816 (1993), 836 (1993), 844 (1993) and 958 (1994) should be terminated. Resolution 824 (1993) and subsequent resolutions regarding safe areas should also be terminated from the same date. The Council said it would review the authorization to establish IFOR with a view to terminating it one year after the transfer of authority from UNPROFOR.

The Council endorsed the establishment of a High Representative to monitor the civilian implementation of the Peace Agreement and mobilize, guide and coordinate the activities of the civilian organizations and agencies involved. It agreed the designation of Carl Bildt as High Representative.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today briefed the Security Council on his recent visits to West Africa and Europe. The briefing covered the Peace Implementation Conference held in London on 8 and 9 December and the signing of the Bosnian Peace Agreement in Paris yesterday. The Secretary-General later announced that he would hold a press conference at Headquarters on Monday.

Also on Monday, the Secretary-General will launch the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty in the Trusteeship Council Chamber. The General Assembly proclaimed 1996 as Poverty Eradication Year to catalyze action at all levels of society.

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The General Assembly today decided that South Africa's unpaid assessments accruing to the regular and peace-keeping budgets during the period from 30 September 1974 to 23 June 1994 should be no longer due and payable. The Assembly took that action, by a resolution adopted without a vote, owing to the unique and exceptional circumstances pertaining to the resumption of South Africa's participation in its work following the elimination of apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial democracy. It stated that today's action should under no circumstances be used as a precedent.

The representative of South Africa said the resolution exorcised the remaining legacy of apartheid -- its intentional withholding of payment of its

membership contributions for 20 years. He announced that his Government would make a voluntary contribution to the United Nations, to be specifically earmarked for peace-keeping operations in Africa.

Also today, the General Assembly adopted four resolutions on the question of Palestine, one on assistance to Nicaragua, and one on the situation in Haiti.

Yesterday, the Assembly called upon States to provide information and assistance for mine clearance, and to locate, remove, destroy or otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines, booby-traps and other devices in accordance with international law. In another action, the Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. Both of those resolutions were adopted without a vote.

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The Secretary-General's strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the years of 1995 to 2000 has made the advancement of women a policy priority of the United Nations, Special Political Adviser Rosario Green said today. She told the Women's International Forum that the plan was being implemented as part of the effort to introduce a new management culture. It involved changes in approaches, attitudes and ways of thinking among all levels of management and emphasized a culture of responsiveness, client-service orientation and gender sensitivity.

The General Assembly had lent its moral and political weight to the plan's three main targets, she noted. Of those, the target of an overall level of 35 per cent women among Professional staff before the end of 1995 was about to be reached. The two other targets were to have at least 25 per cent of senior-level positions held by women staff members before 1997, and an overall level of 50 per cent women by the year 2000.

The strategic plan included measures to assist in reaching the targets, the Special Adviser went on to say. Women applicants from other United Nations agencies were now being considered as internal candidates for vacancy announcements. Women also had the right to benefit from accumulated seniority, with consideration given to their years of service at previous grade levels, thereby accelerating their opportunities for promotion.

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The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will open an office in Sarajevo in March, at the request of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Programme will provide assistance related to governance and aid coordination and conduct rapid assessment studies of the country's needs.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) will play key roles in the repatriation of Bosnian refugees and the provision of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons. The World Bank, the European Union and USAID will provide financial support for the country's reconstruction.

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